

Resilience Against Extremism

A photograph of a small, vibrant green plant with several leaves growing out of a circular hole in a grey, textured concrete surface. The plant is the central focus of the image, symbolizing resilience and growth in a harsh, cracked environment.

5th International
Workshop

Workshop Extreme Beliefs Project

Thursday and Friday 26-27 September 2024

Organizers:

Jakob Ohlhorst, Rik Peels, Anna Haase

Project website:

www.extremebeliefs.com

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5th International
Workshop



“Resilience” refers to an individual’s or community’s ability to adapt and thrive in adverse or challenging circumstances by knowing how to find, create, access, and navigate meaningful coping resources. Extremism threatens individuals, communities, institutions, and societies on multiple dimensions. How should we conceptualise resilience against extremism? Who is responsible for fostering pro-social resilience?

Keynotes:

Beatrice De Graaf (Utrecht)

Michele Grossman
(Deakin)

John Horgan
(Georgia State)

Rik Peels
(VU Amsterdam)

Stijn Sieckelinck
(Amsterdam University of
Applied Sciences)

26-27 September 2024

Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam

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Index

Workshop Extreme Beliefs Project	0
Index	2
Contact information	3
Schedule	4
Day 1: Thursday September 26th, 2024	4
Day 2: Friday September 27th, 2024	5
Theme and set-up	6
Theme	6
Set-up	6
Day 1: Thursday September 26th, 2024	7
Keynote 1 - Michele Grossman	7
Session 1 - Talk 1. Kamil Yilmaz	7
Session 1 - Talk 2. Mariam Habib Matta	8
Session 1 - Talk 3. Wilson Anosike	9
Session 2 - Talk 1. Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen	10
Session 2 - Talk 2. Simon Polinder	11
Session 2 - Talk 3. Oluchi Eze	12
Keynote 2 - John Horgan	13
Day 2: Friday September 27th, 2024	14
Keynote 3 - Stijn Sieckelinck	14
Session 3 - Talk 1. Roel Wolters	15
Session 3 - Talk 2. Suvi Purhonen	16
Keynote 4 - Beatrice de Graaf	17
Session 4 - Talk 1. Ingmar Westerman	18
Session 4 - Talk 2. Joep van Lit	18
Keynote 5 - Rik Peels	20
In case of emergencies	21
Other important information	22
Taxi	22
Zoomlinks and passwords	22
Payment form	22
Other upcoming events by Project Extreme Beliefs	23
24 October 2024 “After Democracy in America? Christian Nationalism and Right-Wing Populism in the 2024 Elections”	23
Late 2024/early 2025: Book launch Beatrice de Graaf, The Radical Redemption Model (OUP 2024)	23

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Schedule

Day 1: Thursday September 26th, 2024

09.30 - 10.00 Registration and coffee

Morning session

10.00 - 10.15 Introduction to the Extreme Beliefs project by Rik Peels

10.15 - 10.30 Introduction to the workshop and symposium by Rik Peels & Jakob Ohlhorst

Chair: Rik Peels

10.30 - 11.30 Keynote 1: Michele Grossman “When resilience goes bad: Implications for resilience to, and of, extremism”

11.30 – 11.45 - Break -

Chair: Rahel Kellich

11.45 - 13.15 Session 1: Non-radicalization, comedy and neutrality

1. Kamil Yilmaz “Resilient Non-Radicalizers: Beating the Odds through Non-Radicalisation Despite Significant Suffering”
2. Mariam Habib Matta “Satirical Shields: a Case Study of how Comedy Undermined Rising Extremist Factions under the Muslim Brotherhood Regime in Egypt”
3. Wilson Anosike “Reinforcing Resilience Through Neutrality”

13.15 - 14.00 Lunch (on location)

Afternoon session

Chair: Clyde Missier

14.00 - 15.30 Session 2: Resilience against Islamism in Kenya and Nigeria

1. Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen “Resilience and resistance in their everyday lives - Al-Shabaab extremism hotspots in Kenya”
2. Simon Polinder “Religious leaders building resilience to violent extremism in Nigeria and Kenya”
3. Oluchi Eze “Hope Amidst Havoc: Resilient Igbo Victims Facing Boko Haram and Herders' Armed Attacks”

15.30 - 16.00 - Break -

Chair: Rik Peels

16.00 - 17.00 Keynote 2: John Horgan “Attracting and Building the Perfect Terrorist: How Violent Extremist Organizations Advertise, Market, Sell, and Trade in Resilience.”

6:00 - Conference Dinner

Day 2: Friday September 27th, 2024

09.30 - 10.00 Coffee

Morning session

Chair: Jakob Ohlhorst

10.00 - 11.00 Keynote 3: Stijn Sieckelinck “Resilience against extremism as a socio-pedagogical challenge”

11.00 - 11.30 - Break -

Chair: Matthijs den Otter

11.30 - 12.30 Session 3: The power of irony and community

1. Roel Wolters “Ironizing the Witch Hunts”
2. Suvi Purhonen “RE-MAP project – Community Resilience, Mental Health, and prevention of Radicalization”

12.30-13.30 Lunch (on location)

Afternoon session

Chair: Nora Kindermann

13.30 - 14.30 Keynote 4: Beatrice de Graaf “Historicizing resilience in the field of extremism: avoiding the collapse fallacy”

Chair: Jakob Ohlhorst

14.30 - 15.30 Session 4: Democracy, ideology and civil servants

1. Ingmar Westerman “In whose name? Acts of terrorism, ideology and resilience”
2. Joep van Lit “Gambitting Democracy: When Civil Servants Do (Or Do Not) Defend Democracy”

15.30 - 16.00 - Break -

Chair: Naomi Kloosterboer

16.00 - 17.00 Keynote 5: Rik Peels “Resilience in Extreme Beliefs and Resilience in Religious and Secular Faith”

from 17.00 Closing Remarks and end of workshop

18.00-22.00 Speaker’s Dinner

Theme and set-up

Theme

This workshop focuses on the concept of resilience against extremism. “Resilience” refers to an individual’s or community’s ability to adapt and thrive in adverse or challenging circumstances by knowing how to find, create, access, and navigate meaningful coping resources. Extremism threatens individuals, communities, institutions, and societies on multiple dimensions. First, they are confronted with extreme behaviour and its consequences. Second, they are confronted with the presence of extremism in their environment, fostering adverse conditions. Third, they may themselves run the risk of radicalisation. Pro-social resilience against all these adversities is a complex phenomenon requiring a broad range of methodological perspectives and approaches.

It is the fifth in a series of interdisciplinary workshops of the extreme beliefs project, in which we study extreme belief and behavior as found in fanaticism, fundamentalism, extremism, conspiracy theorizing, and terrorism. Key to the project is the idea that we ought to take extreme believers and actors seriously, meaning that (i) those actors are to be understood as relatively normal, healthy, reason-responsive human beings, yet with problematic ideas and possibly harmful behavior, and that (ii) their reasons, beliefs, narratives, and religiosity are to be understood as crucial to understanding and explaining these phenomena. The project brings philosophical tools, concepts, arguments, and other resources to a so far largely empirical debate. The four previous workshops were devoted to conceptually mapping the terrain, explanations of extreme belief behavior, extreme beliefs and responsibility, and extremism and subjectivity. This is the last workshop, devoted to resilience towards extreme beliefs.

Set-up

This hybrid workshop is entirely plenary and consists of five keynote lectures and ten talks. All presentations are non-digital, as the speakers present in-person. The session talks are 20 minutes followed by 10 minutes Q&A, and keynote lectures 40 minutes followed by 20 minutes Q&A.

Day 1: Thursday September 26th, 2024

Keynote 1 - Michele Grossman

When resilience goes bad: Implications for resilience to, and of, extremism

The social-ecological model of resilience is often characterised as inherently prosocial process, generating and making accessible, navigable and meaningful multilevel, multi-dimensional resources that help people, communities and societies adapt and thrive in the context of adversity or challenge. However, such thriving can, at times, manifest in antisocial rather than prosocial ways. In some contexts, anyone's resilient responses to challenge or adversity can become maladaptive rather than prosocial. This is especially so if the social ecology in which resilience is navigated is itself deficient or struggling with broader vulnerabilities, so that the most meaningful resources in one's local environment are those that simultaneously create harms (for self and others) while appearing to offer coping and strengthening mechanisms. One of the paradoxes this can create is the formation of a transactional risk economy in which the response to environmental stressors that pose risks and create vulnerabilities for a person or group is exchanged for coping strategies that pose new risks and create new vulnerabilities – a variety of what Mahdiani and Ungar (2021) term 'the dark side of resilience'. This presentation will unpack some of the implications of what happens when resilience goes bad for understanding both the capacity for resistance to, but also the persistence of, harmful forms of extremism such as violent extremism.



About the speaker:

Dr Michele Grossman AM is Professor and Research Chair in Diversity and Community Resilience at the Alfred Deakin Institute for Citizenship and Globalisation, Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. Her research focuses on how best to engage communities in building resilience to violent extremist ideology, recruitment and action. An Associate Editor of *Terrorism and Political Violence*, she received a Member of the Order of Australia (AM) award in 2023.

Session 1 - Talk 1. Kamil Yilmaz

Resilient Non-Radicalizers: Beating the Odds through Non-Radicalisation Despite Significant Suffering.

This study explores how and why some individuals are resilient to radicalization by focusing on individuals who were labelled 'terrorists' for their alleged involvement or support for an

attempted coup that took place in Turkey on July 15, 2016, yet who have shown no sign of violent radicalisation since. Drawing from 15 interviews, it assesses both the potential radicalisation risk factors that the participants display, such as political persecution, imprisonment, torture, social pressure and forced migration. Then it explores participants' explanation for why they have not become radicalized, including the role of the *Hizmet* doctrine, their religious adherence, individual personality traits and resources (e.g., social capital) through a socioecological framework. While terrorism studies have focused extensively on pathways towards radicalisation and countering radicalisation, this study contributes to a small body of research to explore the notion of “non-radicalisation”, informing the literature on resilience and protective factors towards larger populations.



Information about the speaker:

Dr. Yilmaz currently works as a Lecturer and Post-Doctoral researcher at the Cyber Threats Research Centre (CyTREC), Swansea University in the UK. He holds a PhD in applied (political) anthropology from Columbia University (2012). He also holds multiple master's degrees in criminal justice, International Affairs, and Political Anthropology. He has taught undergraduate and graduate students in counterterrorism, international politics, discourse analysis and research methods, based both on theory and practice. In addition to numerous articles in international peer-reviewed journals and book chapters, he has published a book entitled *Disengaging from Terrorism: Lessons from the Turkish Penitents* (Routledge 2014), which has been reviewed as being one of the most innovative books on terrorism and political violence. In his research he uses Computational Social Science, and his research interests include political violence, anthropology of terrorism, discourse analysis, radicalization and deradicalization processes related to terrorism, and terrorists use of the Internet and social media.

Session 1 - Talk 2. Mariam Habib Matta

Satirical Shields: a Case Study of how Comedy Undermined Rising Extremist Factions under the Muslim Brotherhood Regime in Egypt

When considering actors that promote resistance to extremism, oft-overlooked actors that operate separately from the government, activists, academics, media, or even NGOs are comedians. This research focuses on a case study analysis of the role of Bassem Youssef's 'El Bernameg' (2011-2013) in counter-opting the emerging extremist so-called 'Revolutionary' faction of the Muslim Brotherhood under the deposed former President Morsi's presidency from 2012-2013 in Egypt. Upon consideration of the increasing weekly trends of active low-level violence (Molotov cocktails, arson, shootings) and emerging

threatening language and behaviour (inciting chants at rallies) and the alliance between the governing Muslim Brotherhood and Salafi jihadists, there was an increasing growth of mobilisation to radicalise young men specifically towards more extremist behaviour. However, this study aims to demonstrate the significant capacity of cultural tools such as comedy, a prosocial tactic to destabilise extremist narratives. Using Youssef's 'El Bernameg' as a point of analysis, this study demonstrates how political comedy is a critical tool for influencing attitudes towards the underlying ideologies that motivate extremist ideologies. By tracing the history of political humour in Egypt from 'Nokta Shabayaa' popularised under Nasser to songs under Ahmed Fouad Negm to the sarcastic secular undermining of Youssef, political comedy can be one of the most powerful methods of deterrence for engaging in extremist behaviour and destabilisers of extremist ideology. The key strength of this method lies within its simultaneous implicit and overt challenges of extremist behaviours, which undermines extremists' need to be reputationally feared and respected. Deradicalisation relied on lessening the appeal of extremism, pushing for a moderate counterculture. This study aims to reveal the power of political comedy in creating resilience and, indeed, resistance towards rising levels of extremism.

Information about the speaker:

Mariam Habib Matta is affiliated with the LSE- London School of Economics and Political Science.

Session 1 - Talk 3. Wilson Anosike

Reinforcing Resilience Through Neutrality

In his work *Political Liberalism* the Philosopher John Rawls argues for the neutrality of government among competing conceptions of the good life and thus political deliberations should not include what he describes as reference to "comprehensive doctrines". Central to this idea of the good life is how people relate with the metaphysical or what we can conveniently term religion and giving the plurality of religion in modern day states, the sponsorship or recognition of one or two religions among others by the government goes a long way to show or portend preferment of one religion over the other. This recognition or sponsoring of certain religious activities like pilgrimages be it in Christianity, Islam or any other religion whether containing an element of preferment or not goes a long way to portray the truthfulness of such religion in the minds of the citizen since the law, to a very large extent, is a teacher. Thus, the epistemological import of authority, especially governmental authority often propels the fanatic minds to action. This is so since toleration often occurs in the context of doubt with regard to the truth. In other words, the virtue of toleration lies in the fact that we can always be mistaken and thus ought to trade with caution. On the flip side then if the government provides a prima facie argument for the veracity of some religion over the other by sponsoring some of their activities, it then provides the grounds for coercion of

members of other groups that are not so sponsored. Therefore, expressing neutrality by the government when it comes to religious activities will be quite symbolic. This symbolism furthers the narrative of tolerance and therefore reinforces resilience against fanatics by denying the grounds of epistemic arrogance on which the fanatics thrive. This paper, using both historical and textual analysis, argues that governmental neutrality in religion reinforces resilience by dislodging the epistemological grounds in which the fanatic stands.



Information about the speaker

Wilson Anosike is a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, Imo State University, Owerri, Nigeria.

He obtained his doctorate in Philosophy from the National University of Singapore, specializing in the morality of political violence—war and terrorism and Philosophy of Law. He is the author of the book *Power, Governance and the State*. He also teaches: logic, Philosophical Anthropology and the Philosophy of Science.

Session 2 - Talk 1. Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen

Resilience and resistance in their everyday lives: Understanding the impacts of PCVE interventions in the lives of those living in areas deemed Al-Shabaab extremism hotspots in Kenya

Studies on resilience and resistance within the Preventing and Countering Violent Extremism (PCVE) literature pay little attention to how communities may engage in their own resistance efforts and resilience building without outside interventions. Resilience in PCVE interventions is viewed as less dependent on the political agency of individuals and communities, and resilient actions are viewed as adapting, mitigating, and recovering from an exogenous hazard—violent extremism and terrorism. In this article, I argue that resilience, viewed as fundamentally different from resistance, may oversee how resilience can be seen as a tactic of resistance through a peacebuilding framework. I also look at the apolitical understanding of resilience by understanding acts of resilience and resistance based on local contexts embedded within the historical, socio-economic, and political landscapes. I draw on the case of Kenya based on two data sets carried out for my postdoctoral studies (2019-2021) and (2023-2024) to show how individuals from local communities display their resilience and resistance to violent extremism in areas marked for Al-Shabaab recruitment and radicalization. Al-Shabaab is a transnational terrorist movement originating in Somalia with its expansion to Kenya and the wider East African region. The analysis reveals that through everyday constructive resistance practices, individuals or communities at the local level oppose violence, as well as external notions of violent extremism and PCVE in their communities. These tactics of resistance rely on qualities of resilience of getting by and

adjusting to the shocks of living in localities exposed to violence and violent extremism. The dissemination of resilience-resistance practices is contextual and depends on community-state or citizen-state relationships embedded in the histories of state violence, perceived socio-economic marginalization, gender, and intersectionality, as well as existing PCVE programmes and civil society activism. The study argues that exploring resilience ‘from below’, exposes how state-centric conceptualizations of resilience do not fit neatly with how violence-affected communities define and intuitively enact resilience-resistance.



Information about the speaker:

Dr. Fathima Azmiya Badurdeen is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Faculty of Religion, Culture and Society, University of Groningen, Netherlands. She is also a Senior Lecturer at the Department of Social Sciences, Technical University of Mombasa, Kenya. Since 2012, her research interests have focused on the recruitment dynamics for terrorist networks, crime-terror nexus, human trafficking and migrant smuggling networks, and countering violent extremism in the Horn and East African region.

Session 2 - Talk 2. Simon Polinder

Religious leaders building resilience to violent extremism in Nigeria and Kenya

Resilience is the ability and the process of individuals and communities to adapt to, deal with and recover from challenging circumstances and to stick together as a community. In African societies, religious leaders are crucial players when it comes to resilience. Based on more than 70 interviews with religious leaders in Nigeria as well as in Kenya, this workshop will set out what these religious leaders do to deal with violent extremism (VE).

Religious leaders contribute to resilience by educating people (youth) true or peaceful religion and by refuting extremist interpretations. They create space for dialogue, and advance religious tolerance, also called Freedom of Religion or Belief (FoRB). Religious leaders participate in and organize peace programs on various levels: intra-religious, inter-religious and extra-religious. This all takes place in a context in which the media is out for sensation and lacks a professional attitude of reporting factually. The government worsens resilience because it does not provide proper education, leading to misunderstanding of religion and increasing vulnerability of unemployed youth to become recruited. The government also fails in her call to do justice, in general, but also in countering violent extremism. This leads to high perceived injustices, low expectations regarding the government and feelings of powerlessness or tendency to radicalize.

This research in Africa demonstrates that resilience of individuals and communities are important, but that they are dependent on the role of other institutions and political structures.

Also, many VE incidents in Africa are (seen as) very complex, messy and the result of various dynamics and therefore resilience is also a dynamic, multi-layered phenomenon.



Information about the speaker:

Simon Polinder Ph.D is postdoctoral researcher *Reimagining Religion, Security and Social Transformation* at the Department History of International Relations at Utrecht University. His current research is on religious leaders and their response to violent extremism in Kenya and Nigeria. He studied at Utrecht University, VU University Amsterdam and Georgetown University. He is the co-editor of the volume *Christian Faith, Philosophy and International Relations: the*

Lamb and the Wolf (Brill, 2019). His dissertation received an Honorable Mention for the Mark Juergensmeyer Best Dissertation Award 2023. He recently published *Towards A New Christian Political Realism. The Amsterdam School of Philosophy and the Role of Religion in International Relations* (Routledge, 2024)

Session 2 - Talk 3. Oluchi Eze

Hope Amidst Havoc: Resilient Igbo Victims Facing Boko Haram and Herders' Armed Attacks

The Igbo people of Nigeria have faced severe brutality and devastation at the hands of Boko Haram and Fulani herdsmen. These acts of terrorism, often underpinned by religious extremism, have resulted in significant loss of lives, destruction of properties, and profound psychological trauma. This study aims to document the experiences of the Igbo victims, highlighting both their suffering and their remarkable resilience.

Employing the Narrative Inquiry method, this research captures the personal stories of the Igbo victims through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, and analysis of secondary sources. These narratives provide a comprehensive account of how these individuals and communities have coped, adapted, and strived for normalcy amidst ongoing violence. The findings reveal the complex interplay of trauma and resilience, illustrating how the Igbo people navigate their challenging circumstances.

In conclusion, this work not only documents the suffering endured by the Igbo people but also provides valuable insights on how certain religious and secular resources, such as beliefs, practices, rituals, and systems, can contribute to making communities more resilient against radicalization.



Information about the speaker:

Oluchi Chinwendu Honour Eze is an external PhD candidate in the Extreme Beliefs project specializing in peace, trauma, and religion. With a Master of Science in Peace and Conflict Studies, he excels in conflict resolution theories and methodologies. His current research explores the interplay of religious fundamentalism, violence, and trauma-coping mechanisms in West Africa, focusing on the resilience of the Igbo ethnic group.

Outside academia, Oluchi is a spiritual caregiver, counsellor, web designer, graphic animator, book editor, and film and music producer. His diverse skills and commitment aim to significantly contribute to both academic discourse and practical applications in peace, trauma, and religious studies.

Keynote 2 - John Horgan

Attracting and Building the Perfect Terrorist: How Violent Extremist Organizations Advertise, Market, Sell, and Trade in Resilience.

The concept of resilience has enjoyed much attention from those who study violent extremism. Research has addressed such questions as how resilience functions among those affected by terrorist violence, and how resilience might work as a protective factor in preventing radicalization to violent extremism. Much more recently, research has even begun to explore how those who *study* terrorism can develop resilience against the harmful effects of exposure to what terrorists do. This presentation does not address any of these topics. Instead, it examines resilience from the perspective of those who participate in terrorism. It explores how terrorist groups (their rank and file members, recruiters, and leaders) construct and operationalize resilience both as a tool for recruitment and propaganda as well as an element in competitive organizational outbidding. Theoretical and practical counter-terrorism considerations will be explored.



Information about the speaker

Prof. Dr. John Horgan is a Distinguished University Professor at Georgia State University's Department of Psychology where he also directs the Violent Extremism Research Group (VERG). His work is widely published, with books including *The Psychology of Terrorism*, *Divided We Stand: The Strategy and Psychology of Ireland's Dissident Terrorists*, *Walking Away from Terrorism*, *Leaving Terrorism Behind*, and *Terrorism Studies: A Reader; Terrorist Minds*. He has held positions at the University of Massachusetts (Lowell), Penn State, University of St. Andrews, and University College, Cork. His recent book, *Terrorist Minds: The Psychology of Violent Extremism from al Qaeda to the Far*

Right, was published by Columbia University Press in 2023.

Day 2: Friday September 27th, 2024

Keynote 3 - Stijn Sieckelinck

Resilience against extremism as a socio-pedagogical challenge

We live in fearful times. Radicality is commonly linked to fear, anger, and violence, but it may also announce hope. Crises of the environment, of public health, of democratic culture, and of humanity as a whole spread across the globe and require some radical responses that will no longer sustain the current political and economical status quo.

Educational thinkers have discussed the value of educating against extremism at length. However, the political expectation that education should be able to build resilience against extremism raises doubts. The conundrum: if education is mainly used as an instrument to prevent extremism, it will most likely not succeed. And if it does succeed, the educational outcome is larger than only the prevention of extremism. Organizing resilience to violent extremism is a socio-pedagogical challenge that requires an eye for individual and societal development, and needs to be materialized in formal and non-formal educational settings where whole-school- approaches, and collaboration with external socio-cultural partners are advisory. Hence, the importance of resetting the parameters of a truly pedagogical response that cannot be predicated on fear.



Information about the speaker:

Dr Stijn Sieckelinck is concerned with issues regarding social education. As a 'thinker in a world of doing', he tries to contribute to better insights and approaches, in science, practice, and policy, wherever our relationship with young people is at stake.

After graduation, he developed a pedagogical outlook on radicalisation and polarization, in which the concept of soci(et)al resilience proved helpful.

Since 2021, he works as a Professor at the University of Applied Sciences of Amsterdam, the Netherlands, where he coordinates research on youth work. He holds a PhD in Social Educational Theory.

Session 3 - Talk 1. Roel Wolters

“Ironizing the Witch Hunts”

This paper investigates the application of irony in contemporary interpretations of the witch hunts, positing that irony has been a significantly underexplored mechanism in the historical suppression of certain political groups while also serving as a catalyst for political change. Utilizing Søren Kierkegaard’s *The Concept of Irony*, the paper examines the interplay between irony and androcentrism. Kierkegaard’s theories are contextualized within modern political discourse, incorporating insights from Dera Sipe’s *Kierkegaard and Feminism: A Paradoxical Friendship*. Kierkegaard argues that irony, when properly controlled, acts as a disruptive force in political discourse, thereby facilitating change and offering resilience against being ensnared by the status quo. The discussion is further enriched by Silvia Federici’s *Caliban and the Witch*, which explores the subjugation of female reproductive organs during the rise of the scientific era. Federici illustrates how intellectuals of that period adopted an androcentric and ironic stance toward the witch hunts, demonstrating that irony can also perpetuate the status quo by avoiding responsibility for the religious fanaticism that led to the witch hunts. Additionally, Brydie Kosmina’s *Feminist Afterlives of the Witch* is considered for its portrayal of the witch as a monstrous reclamation, offering an ironic critique of prevailing societal attitudes. In this context, ironic distance is not used for historical erasure but as a critique of pop culture’s portrayal of the witch. Ultimately, the paper proposes that a playful approach, supported by a controlled sense of irony, can generate novel political discourses and offer resilience against adherence to extreme worldviews. This approach provides new perspectives on societal attitudes, and demonstrates how irony can both hinder and facilitate societal change. Irony is primarily explored as a means of distancing from extremist discourses. This distancing can occur negatively, by avoiding moral responsibilities, or positively, by actively combating extremism and fanaticism, thus providing a counterweight.



Information about the speaker:

Roel Wolters is a recent graduate with a Research Master's in Philosophy from Radboud University Nijmegen, specializing in Metaphysics and Epistemology. His academic focus lies in 19th and 20th-century (proto-)existential philosophy, engaging with thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Jaspers, Heidegger, and Arendt to address existence-oriented epistemological and metaphysical questions. He is committed to expanding the boundaries of these philosophical traditions, frequently integrating insights from various disciplines and cultures to enrich his inquiry.

Session 3 - Talk 2. Suvi Purhonen

RE-MAP project – Community Resilience, Mental Health, and prevention of Radicalization

This abstract is written by MIELI Mental Health Finland. MIELI is a non-governmental organization dedicated to mental health. MIELI has offered crisis support in Finland for over 120 years and operates through 54 local member associations. MIELI runs a three-year project RE-MAP - Resilience, Mental Health, and prevention of violent Radicalization, which is funded by EU Internal Security Fund (2023-2025).

The aim of the project is to develop a community mentoring model and educate the key members of different communities to strengthen community resilience, strengthen mental health skills and prevent risk factors of violent radicalization.

In the project we have chosen the community approach based on the basic need of an individual to have social interaction and to have a feeling of belonging. This need is also used by the extremist groups when recruiting members. The groups offer simple explanations of complex problems, which attracts people to familiarize themselves with their stories. In the RE-MAP project, we wanted to develop a counterforce to this by supporting healthy communities' well-being and support them to strengthen the community resilience. EU Strategy for the Prevention of Radicalization 2022-2023 mentions the local level, communities and building resilience. According to the report, the prevention of radicalization has focused strongly on individuals and groups in recent years. However, the focus is now increasingly turning to local neighbor-level acceleration factors and interaction patterns.

By the date the RE-MAP project has reached out to 13 different, multi-lingual communities in Finland. The first mentoring training is held in September 2024 and 15 members from the communities have signed up to the training. In the workshop we would like to introduce the first insights from the community mentor training from the perspective of community resilience.

Information about the speaker:



Suvi Purhonen received a Master's degree from Freie Universität Berlin in Social pedagogy, 2008, and European Master of Intercultural Education from Freie Universität Berlin 2011. Currently Suvi studies Trauma focused psychotherapy at the University of Oulu, Finland.

Works at MIELI Mental Health Finland since 2013 as a crisis counsellor and a senior advisor. Currently working as a project manager at MIELI in the three-year project (2022-2025) RE-MAP- Resilience, Mental Health, and Prevention of violent Radicalization.

Keynote 4 - Beatrice de Graaf

Historicizing resilience in the field of extremism: avoiding the collapse fallacy

Studies on resilience in society are mostly embedded in the social sciences, where – originating in a biological and ecological discourse – resilience is studied as a brand of societal change. Following a model of sequential steps, elements of growth, increasing connectedness, complexity, shock/stress, response and collapse are studied. Social scientists for example identify how social groups and communities deal with a wide array of shocks to their system, and map the ability of that system to cope with and adapt to these stress factors (Haldon 2021). Yet, the fallacy here is on the notion of collapse and inability to cope with change. The default position is implicated in the thesis that societies have a difficult job in resisting collapse, and can only be successfully resilient if they manage to tap from specific resources and find strategies to avoid that collapse. Historians however have long since demystified and debunked the thesis of the waxing and waning of civilizations. Yes, states, societies and institutions alike can be confronted with huge shocks, and may suffer from them. But rather than trying to identify generic and abstract factors of some ‘adaptive cycle’, in this paper I would like to avoid the collapse fallacy and state that societies are normally very stable and will only very seldom be undermined by political violence and extremism – if so, it is mostly a case of all out interstate or intrastate war that will pull them over the brink. Literature on political violence and extremism shows us that states are hardly touched by terrorism in terms of economic setbacks, markets won’t really plunge, even tourism remains stable over the intermediate run. Therefore, it is not the vulnerability (as the default position of a state prone to collapse implies) but the ordinary, mundane state of rigidity to terrorism and extremism that should be understood properly. Why do so many attacks and extremist incidents not have the least effect on either the political or social economy of a country? What do we actually mean if we claim that a ‘society needs to be resilient’ against extremism? I will first dive into the collapse fallacy, will then elucidate how the adaptive cycle of civilization collapse has been debunked in the historical discipline, and will then proceed in laying down what drives the resistance of our mundane, everyday societal life against extremism inspired upheaval. I will do so by tapping from research that we have done in primary, secondary and vocational schools in the Netherlands over the past 10 years. Which resources exactly can we identify that make pupils and students so invulnerable (or resilient) against extremist incitement and attacks? And how can we bolster these existing, but oftentimes overlooked and underrated, everyday strategies of invulnerability?



Information about the speaker:

Prof. Dr. Beatrice de Graaf is Distinguished Professor in the Faculty of Humanities, and historian/security & terrorism researcher. Her research focuses on how states and societies try to maintain high levels of security and how these attempts relate to core values and institutions, such as democracy, freedom, rule of law, constitutional and responsible government. She studies the emergence of and

threats to such security arrangements from the 19th century until the present. De Graaf is a member of The Netherlands Academy of Sciences (KNAW). In 2018, she was awarded the NWO Stevin Prize, one of the highest honours in Dutch Academia. She is core editor of the *Journal of Modern European History* and of *Terrorism and Political Violence*. For her monograph *Fighting Terror after Napoleon* (CUP, 2020), she was awarded the Arenberg Prize for the Best Book in European History. Her monograph *The Radical Redemption Model* (OUP) will come out in 2024, in Rik Peels' series on extreme beliefs. From January 2025 she will start as Scientific Director of the new research project ADAPT, investigating resilience after crises, 1800-present.

Session 4 - Talk 1. Ingmar Westerman

In whose name?

Acts of terrorism, ideology and resilience

When killing in name of others, which is what actors that are usually labelled terrorists basically (threaten to) do, they claim to act on behalf of people with whom they say to share a faith, a common origin or even a destiny which, they also claim, is severely threatened. The claim that terrorist acts are performed in name of others is a discursive strategy that is enabled by the use of ideology. This presentation considers some political functions that ideology fulfils when it is linked to public acts of lethal violence. And stresses why contesting terrorists' claims to kill in the name of others is a crucial element for resilience by denying their legitimacy and by reclaiming (collective) agency.

Information about the speaker:

Dr Ingmar Westerman is strategy advisor at AIVD, the Dutch General Intelligence and Security Service. With a background in (the history of) political theory, his areas of interest as a practitioner include extremist and terrorist ideologies; the relation between democracy and national security; and that between citizenship and political violence. He has published on the connection between AIVD and academia, and on secrecy and transparency with regard to intelligence work.

Session 4 - Talk 2. Joep van Lit

Gambitting Democracy: When Civil Servants Do (Or Do Not) Defend Democracy

Democratic resilience has been conceptualized as a democratic system's ability to resist autocratization or "bounce back" once autocratization has happened. However, a system's capability to do so comes under pressure when it is democratically elected incumbents who

challenge democracy – something which has occurred in Venezuela, Hungary and Poland, but arguably also in South Korea, Greece, and the United States. In light of the rise of extremist and anti-democratic or democratically ambivalent norms, politicians, and parties, democracy can no longer rely on “the rules and institutions of the game”. Instead, democratic defenders – actors who actively aim to stop or revert autocratization – have started to play a pivotal role.

In this presentation, I argue first that civil servants have a key part to play as they (1) are knowledgeable about the democratic process and as such able to recognize anti-democratic threats early on; and (2) experience autocratization “in their surroundings”, either as the target of autocratic action, or by being complicit in executing proposals that might harm democracy. Second, I use 30 semi-structured expert interviews, including a developmental vignette experiment, with civil servants in the Dutch national government (varying in seniority, department, and task) to show when and how they defend democracy.

The results are threefold. One, civil servants perceive they are capable to recognize threats to democracy, even in an apparently liberal and consolidated democracy as the Netherlands. In fact, they do see these threats unfolding: before the 2023-elections and after. Two, civil servants perceive they have the opportunity to act against these threats, but also see barriers to their defence and limitations on their opportunities. Three, civil servants are not always willing to react to these threats, especially when the debate becomes politically contentious and when (informal) repression from the political leadership, upper management, or citizens takes place.

Information about the speaker:



Joep van Lit is doctoral researcher at Radboud University, Nijmegen, studying the resilience of democracies. In his research, he focuses on the roles of elites and citizens in resisting autocratization-attempts by democratically elected incumbents. He uses a multi-method approach, ranging from computational social science, survey experiments, and elite interviews. In the last year, he has been invited to discuss the resilience of Dutch democracy in the Dutch parliament, as well as with the Dutch Ministry of the Interior.

Keynote 5 - Rik Peels

Resilience in Extreme Beliefs and Resilience in Religious and Secular Faith

It is common in the literature on extreme beliefs, such as fundamentalist beliefs, extremist beliefs, and conspiracy beliefs to point out that they are resilient to counter-evidence. In some cases, such resilience even takes the shape of self-evidential insulation: the content of the belief is such that it almost cannot be refuted and it is set up in such a way that one can easily re-interpret counter-evidence as evidence in favor of the extreme belief in question. In the academic literature, such resilience is taken to be something epistemically and perhaps also morally problematic. Yet, in the philosophical and theological literature on religious and secular faith, such as faith in democracy and faith in humanity, it is also widely claimed that such faith is resilient to counter-evidence. However, such faith is usually taken as something epistemically and morally good, the resilience included. This suggests that there is a difference between resilience in extreme beliefs and resilience in religious and secular faith. What is it then and what light does it cast on extreme beliefs and non-extreme faith?



Information about the speaker:

Rik Peels holds a University Research Chair *Analytic and Interdisciplinary Philosophy of Religion* in the Faculty of Religion and Theology and the Faculty of Humanities at the Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam. He is also Senior Research Associate at the *African Centre for Epistemology and Philosophy of Science* at the University of Johannesburg. He recently published *Ignorance: A Philosophical Study* (OUP 2023), *Life without God: An Outsider's Look at Atheism* (CUP 2023), *Monotheism and Fundamentalism: Prevalence, Potential, Resilience* (Cambridge University Press, 2024) and forthcoming: Stepen Grimm, Rik

Peels, René van Woudenberg, *A Philosophy of the Humanities* (OUP 2025). He is the main editor of the 7-volume *Extreme Belief and Behavior Series* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2024-2026).

In case of emergencies

Diefstal en verlies

Neem bij verlies of diefstal van prive of VU-eigendommen en bij een verdachte situatie direct contact op met de beveiliging
85854 of
020 - 59 85854
vu.nl/veiligheid

Calamiteiten

Bel in het geval van een calamiteit het VU alarmnummer
22222 of
020 - 59 82222

INFORMATIE OVER EEN VEILIGE CAMPUS EN PLATTEGROND AAN DE BINNENZIJDE

Gastvrij en alert

De VU Campus is een open en gastvrije omgeving. De VU heeft een actieve rol in het herkennen, voorkomen en beheersen van veiligheidsrisico's en incidenten. Medewerkers en studenten aan de VU dragen uiteraard ook bij aan een veilige campus.

Noodsituatie
 In acute situaties die direct hulp vereisen, bel je altijd het VU alarmnummer 22222 of 020 - 59 82222. De VU BHV wordt dan opgeroepen. Volg bij noodsituaties de aanwijzingen op van de beveiliging, de BHV of de locatiedeskundige.

Meld- en adviespunt Veiligheid
 Dit is er voor zowel studenten als medewerkers aan de VU. Je kunt hier op vertrouwelijke basis melding maken van interne (fysieke en/of sociale) incidenten, onveilige situaties en bedreiging (ook online). Aan de hand van jouw melding kunnen we maatregelen treffen om herhaling te voorkomen. Zie vu.nl/veiligheid. Meld- en Adviespunt Veiligheid

De VU Campus is volledig rookvrij
 Hiermee realiseren we een nog prettigere en gezondere studeer- en werkomgeving. Samen leveren we een bijdrage aan een Rookvrije Generatie.

Bij brand, ongeval en calamiteiten

1. Blijf rustig
 2. Sta de handmelder in
 3. Bel het VU alarmnummer 22222 (intern) of 020 - 59 82222 (mobiel)
- Meld: Naam
 Telefoonnummer
 Plaats
 Soort calamiteit
4. Alarmeer collega's
 5. Sluit ramen en deuren
 6. Indien mogelijk: blus vuur met brandblusser of brandslang
 7. Blijf bij het slachtoffer tot de hulpverlener aanwezig is
 8. Volg ontruimingsinstructies op

Plaatsen van fietsen
 Houd trottoirs en vluchtroutes vrij, plaats fietsen in de fietsenrekken of fietsenstallingen

Legitimatie
 Indien gevraagd, ben je ook op de VU wettelijk verplicht je legitimatie te tonen.

Heb je vragen of opmerkingen over de flyer, mail dan naar: servicesdesk.fc@vu.nl
 @VU, FCO, NOVEMBER 2021



In case of fire, accident or other emergency

1. Remain calm
 2. Break the emergency seal
 3. Call the emergency number 22222 (internal) or 020 - 59 82222 (mobile)
- Report: Name
 Phone number
 Location
 Kind of emergency
4. Warn colleagues
 5. Close windows and doors
 6. If possible: put out the fire with extinguisher or fire hose
 7. Remain with victim until the emergency responder arrives
 8. Follow the evacuation instructions

Bicycle parking
 Do not block the pavement or escape routes. Use the designated bicycle racks and bicycle storage.

Identification
 You are legally required to show identification if asked any-where on the VU Campus.

If you have questions or comments about this flyer, please mail: servicesdesk.fc@vu.nl
 @VU, FCO, NOVEMBER 2021

Welcoming and vigilant

The VU Campus is an open and welcoming place. We therefore actively work to identify, prevent and mitigate security risks and incidents. Naturally, university staff and students have a role to play in ensuring a secure and safe campus.

Emergencies
 In emergency situations where help is urgently required, always call the VU emergency number 22222 or 020 - 59 82222. The Emergency Response Team or location expert.

Safety and security reporting centre
 For both students and staff. Any reports of incidents of social injustice or physical abuse or injury, unsafe situations or threats made in person or online, can be reported to this office or on this hotline and will be treated as confidential. Your report will help us take steps to prevent re-occurrence of such events. See vu.nl/safety. Safety and Security Reporting Centre

VU Campus is completely smoke-free
 This will ensure a more pleasant and healthier work and study environment. Let's work together towards a smoke-free generation.

Theft or Loss

In the event of theft or loss of personal or university property, contact security:
85854 or
020 - 59 85854
vu.nl/safety

Emergency

In case of an emergency please dial the VU emergency number
22222 or
020 - 59 82222

INFORMATION AND MAP ABOUT SAFETY ON CAMPUS CAN BE FOUND ON THE OPPOSITE SIDE

Verzamelaars VU Campus / Campus assembly points

BEZOEKADRES / VU-HOOFDGEBOUW.
 VISITING ADDRESS / MAIN BUILDING VRIJE UNIVERSITEIT.
 DE BOELELAAN 1105
 1081 HV AMSTERDAM

Legenda / Legend

Verzamelpunt voor OI2 Labgebouw en ACTA
 Assembly point for OI2 Lab building and ACTA

Looproute naar het verzamelpunt bij het OI2 Labgebouw
 Walking route to the assembly point at the OI2 Lab building

Verzamelaars voor The Basket, W&N, NU, sentimenteel en Inforum
 Assembly point for Basket, Mathematics and Sciences building, Exam hall and Inforum

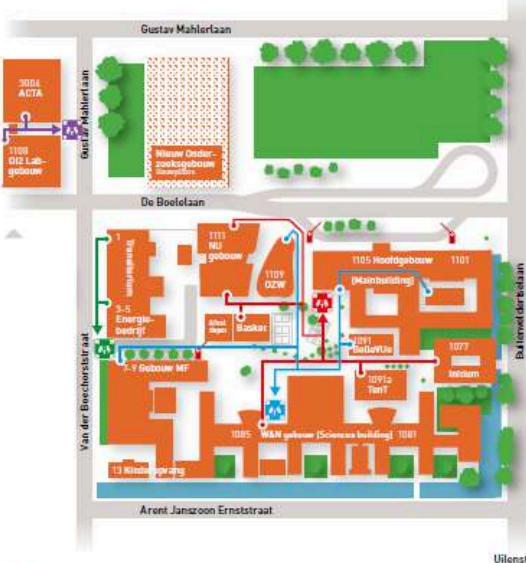
Looproute naar het verzamelpunt bij het Hoofgebouw
 Walking route to the assembly point at the Main building

Verzamelpunt voor het Transitorium
 Assembly point for the Transitorium

Looproute naar het verzamelpunt bij de Medische Faculteit
 Walking route to the assembly point at the Faculty of Medicine

Verzamelpunt voor het OZW-gebouw, Medische Faculteit en Hoofgebouw
 Assembly point for OZW building, Faculty of Medicine and Main building

Looproute naar het verzamelpunt bij het W&N-gebouw
 Walking route to the assembly point at the Mathematics and Science building



De VU Campus is volledig rookvrij
 VU Campus is completely smoke free

Bij ontruiming

1. Blijf rustig
2. Volg de instructies van de BHV of de locatiedeskundige (herkenbaar aan de oranje armband)
3. Maak gebruik van aangegeven vluchtroute
4. Gebruik nooit de lift
5. Loop achter elkaar in trappenhuizen (invoegen volgens ritssluitingsprincipe)
6. Ga naar de verzamelaars
7. Wacht op instructies

VU alarmnummer
22222 (intern) of
020 - 59 82222 (mobiel)

Algemeen nummer
89898 (intern) of
020 - 59 89898 (mobiel)



In an evacuation

1. Stay calm
2. Follow the instructions issued by emergency response officer or the company emergency responder (wearing an orange armband)
3. Use indicated evacuation route
4. Never use the elevator
5. Descend stairs in single file (allow others to merge smoothly)
6. Go to the assembly point
7. Wait for instructions

VU emergency number
22222 (internal) or
020 - 59 82222 (mobile)

General number
89898 (internal) or
020 - 59 89898 (mobile)

Other important information

Taxi

Some of the taxi organizations in Amsterdam where you can order an electric taxi.

Bolt: Order: Bolt app: <https://bolt.eu/nl/> Enter your destination, Select Bolt Electric.

HUN: Order: HUN.nu or 088 - 800 7887. HUN vehicles are 100 percent electric.

Zoomlinks and passwords

The scheduled Zoom meeting:

Topic: EB Resilience workshop

Time: Sep 26, 2024 10:00 AM

Sep 27, 2024 10:00 AM

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://vu-live.zoom.us/j/97219876778?pwd=ZKXYTICY8KAaKvaqteBmQmP2ywbaRT.1>

Meeting ID: 972 1987 6778

Passcode: 474826

Payment form

If you have not paid yet, you can pay through the instructions below.

Name: Stichting VU

IBAN: NL04 DEUT0421756705

Swift/ BIC: DEUTNL2A

To put in the description (!): EBS5 September WBS R/004022.01

Physical attendance:

All speakers and team members: Free.

Regular attendees: 200 euros. This fee includes the workshop dinner on Thursday night.

PhD students: 100 euros. This fee includes the workshop dinner on Thursday night.

Students: free; Joining for dinner: 50 euros.

Digital attendance:

For free

Other upcoming events by Project Extreme Beliefs

24 October 2024 “After Democracy in America? Christian Nationalism and Right-Wing Populism in the 2024 Elections”

Lecture by Philip Gorski

<https://extremebeliefs.com/event/lecture-by-philip-gorski/>

Late 2024/early 2025: Book launch Beatrice de Graaf, *The Radical Redemption Model* (OUP 2024)